

ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT APPROVAL

STATE BOARD MEETING DATE March 24, 2008

SUBJECT: Changes to AZ LEARNS School Evaluations

SUBMITTED BY: Robert Franciosi, Deputy Associate Superintendent, Research and Evaluation

MANAGEMENT TEAM REVIEW:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

AZ LEARNS is the school evaluation system required by state law. The AZ LEARNS school profiles released in the fall rank schools in the following categories: excelling, highly performing, performing, underperforming, and failing.

ADE is proposing the following changes to the AZ LEARNS formula to take effect for the profiles released in the fall of 2008.

1. Growth/Improvement Points for Grades 4, 6, and 7.

AZ LEARNS gives credit to schools for improvement or growth in aggregate student performance over time. Up until now schools have only been given credit for improvement in grades 3, 5, 8, and high school due to the fact that the current, approved formula requires three years of test scores for the calculation.

In addition to adding growth in grades 4, 6, and 7 to the evaluation formula, our accountability working group recommended revisiting the growth targets for the other grades. The last time these targets were set was in 2005, the first year of the revised AIMS test, so the growth targets are due for a re-examination.

In addition, we are taking the opportunity to make other changes to how growth points are calculated in order to simplify the formula. These are:

- Consolidating growth targets. In the past, growth targets have been set by grade and by subject. We are proposing to set growth targets by grade span (the grade spans are grades 3-8 and HS) and by subject.
- Calculating growth achieved by averaging year-to-year growth in a school instead of the comparing a one-year baseline to a two-year average of the subsequent years.
- Allowing growth to be measured for group sizes of less than 16.

2. Unified Achievement Profiles for Combined Middle/High Schools.

Up until now, schools serving both the elementary/middle and high school grade spans have received two separate AZ LEARNS achievement profiles: one for the elementary/middle

grades, and one for the high school grades. This created some confusion and difficulty, especially if a school received an underperforming profile at one level and a performing or higher profile at another.

Last year, state law was amended to allow the calculation of a unified profile for combined middle/high schools. This year we are proposing a combined profile that will comprise all the components of the AZ LEARNS evaluation at both levels:

- AIMS results
- Measure of Academic Progress
- Graduation and dropout rates
- AYP evaluation

The Board will also be asked to approve a separate performance scale for these schools.

**BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: [] INFORMATION [X] ACTION/DESCRIBED
BELOW**

ATTACHMENTS: YES [X] NO []